5 tips to tackle offshore development time differences

Introduction

With the concept and practice of offshoring booming as business seek top talent that they can't find at home — it's important not to forget some of the potential challenges that CTOs foresee before building a global team.

One of these is **time zone differences** between their local and offshore engineers, and how that **may affect collaborative efforts and delivery of products and services.** Let's take a closer look.

1. Hiring the right people

When hiring engineers, assessing their fit for your company is key. They aren't outsourced developers, but full-time employees of your organisation. **The right offshore partner on the ground** won't just test for technical skills but also for cultural fit. This means:

- They're invested in the products they work on

- They will go the extra mile to **make the collaboration work effectively**

- More willing to work different hours on occasion to collaborate in real time with their counterparts at HQ.

Source: Global Knowledge

90% of the problems when managing distributed teams are people-related

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2. Communicate asynchronously

Platforms like Google Meet and Zoom have changed the way we work and **communicate in remote and distributed teams**. However, with time differences it's simply not always possible.

- Pre-recorded training and **onboarding videos** will help people feel engaged

- Implementing comprehensive project **management tools** to help achieve seamless collaboration

- Reduces expectations of an immediate response to **non-urgent task**

3. Implement agile methodology

Using agile methodologies when working with a significant time difference **can improve team performance**, increase overall visibility, help to keep everyone is on the same page.

It's about promoting independent work, without micromanagement and excessive approval processes from someone in a different time zone.

- Hold regular meetings like **a daily scrum** call or weekly sprints

- Track projects using **tools** like Trello, Jira, or Asana

- Ensure all the team is aware of **who is responsible** for each part of the project development cycle.

4. Time-zone management tools

One way to navigate offshore time differences is to invest in tools to help make **collaborating as smooth as possible**. Some of the major ones include:

- Timezone.io
- World Clock Meeting Planner
- World Time Buddy

These applications help you keep **track of time across continents** and help to plan meetings more efficiently.

Source: Otter

Over 35% of employees waste 2-5 hours per day on unnecessary meetings and calls

5. Embrace flexibility within your teams

After the pandemic, the workplace and what people expect has changed. Flexibility not only **delivers employee satisfaction**, but can improve engagement and help when working across time zones.

- Be comfortable switching meetings around to ensure they **match everyone's individual needs** — both professionally and personally

- Make spontaneous catch ups part and parcel of the day, when applicable. It's the **virtual version of the desk catch-up** conversation. A key part of team building and bonding.

- Ensure **everyone has visibility of each others'** calendars, projects, and tasks to help facilitate all of the above.

Thank you

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